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The Right Way
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Seeking God.

A
SERMON

Preach'd at
Great Darnmouth

On the 11th of May, 1692.
Being the Day of the Monthly Fast.

By *James Hannott* Minister of the
Gospel there.

1 Cor. Xv. 10.----Yet not I, but the Grace of God.

L O N D O N,

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THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO KNOW THE TRUTH

THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO KNOW THE TRUTH
OF
THE
GOD

A
SERMON

PREACHED AT
Great Brunswick

During the Day of the Monthly Fast
By the Rev. Henry A. Winter of the
First Baptist Church

NEW YORK
Published by the
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To my worthy Friends, Inhabitants of the Town of Great Yarmouth, who frequent that Religious Assembly I relate unto.

Beloved in our Lord !

THE Design of the following Sermon is to give the true Notion, (tho' not a perfect Description,) of a Religious Fast. The frequent Return of these Days, I have fear'd should occasion our degenerating into a Formal and meer Customary Observance of the Externals of them. To prevent this, and more fully to explicate and press the Duty of a Fast-day, my thoughts were exercis'd upon this Subject. And when the Discourse had serv'd you in this, it was laid up among its fellows ; it being no part of my intention, in either the Composing or Preaching of it, that it should be more publick. And there it had still continued, if the joyn

The Preface.

Request of several of you, had not oblig'd me to deliver it into your hands. I question not but it was a holy zeal for the Divine Truths insisted on, your regard to the practice of Righteousness, your love of Mercy and desire to walk humbly with God, from whence your importunity did proceed, accompany'd with a hope that the same things might be promoted in others; which is so good an End, that if it may in any measure be attained, I shall have no cause to Repent of my compliance with you in it. The Lord grant it may be so, to whose blessing for that purpose I now commit it. And for you, my Heart's desire and Prayer is, that ye may stand perfect and compleat in all the Will of God: Walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless. I am.

Your Obliged and Affectionate
Servant in the Gospel.

J. H.

Tarmouth June
16. 1692.

The

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Micah VI. 8.

He hath shewed thee, oh man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love Mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?

THese words are the *Prophet's* answer to a solicitous question that the *Jews* did propound unto him. To understand the design and pertinency of the *Answer* 'twill be needful we reflect upon the *Question*, and also the *occasion* of it.

The Lord had a controversie with his People, and said ver. 2.
that he would plead with Israel. And that that He
charges them with, was their Ingratitude and unthank-
fulness to Him for his many favours and benefits be-
stowed upon them: Two of which, as more signal, ver. 4.
He does particularly recount; his delivering them
from the Tyranny of Pharaoh in Egypt, and his defend- ver. 5.
ing them from the Incantments of Balaam in Moab.

And having such *evidence* to produce in his *Cause*, He might well *challenge* them, as He does, *ver. 3.* *oh my People, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee?* q. d. what have I commanded you, that you should count *my service* a *Burden*? or wherein can you fault my conduct and *providence* towards you? have I been unmindful of you or wanting to do you good? if I have, come forth and *plead* it, and *testifie* against me. But on the contrary does not the whole

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Ezek. - 18.
29.

of my proceedings with you testify for me? Witness what I did for you in *Egypt*, and what I did for you in the *Wilderness*: you had to this day been a *Captive* People, if I had not *redeem'd* you; had not I *defended* you, the *Devil* and his *Agents* had prevail'd to scatter and break you in pieces. Remember, oh my People these things, my ancient *loving kindness* to your *Fathers* whose Mercies you inherit; and have you any *cause* then to complain of my *service*? can you *mend* your selves by changing your *Lord*? oh house of *Israel*, are not my *ways equal*? are not your *ways unequal*?

ver. 6.

This charge was so home and *demonstrative* that they had nothing to reply, were *convicted* in their *Conscience*, and justify God: they are made sensible that they had complain'd of Him *without* cause, that they had *falsely* accus'd his Providence, and by their unthankful and undutiful carriage towards God, had highly provok'd his *Anger* against them; and now that that they are most *solicitous* about is, how they may have the Lord *pacify'd* and reconcil'd to them.

Hereupon they move the *Prophet* with this *Question*, *Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God*? The Lord, (as if they had said) we see, is *Angry* with us, as indeed he has just cause to be, and we are afraid that his *Judgments* should break forth upon us, as we have deser'vd they should; oh! What shall we do to avert them? How shall we make our appearance before this *high* God, or what shall we say unto him, or who shall *direct* us what to do, that we may get the Lord to be at peace with us?

My *Text* contains an *Answer* to this question, only before the *Prophet* comes to that, He represents this People as suggesting some *methods* to themselves which they

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they thought might serve to atone the anger of God and to procure his favour towards them. They inquire whether a punctual observance of the outward Institutions of God's *Worship* might not avail to that end, and proffer to address themselves to him with *burnt Offerings and Calves of a year old*, as the Law requir'd. And if more than the *ordinary* Sacrifices were necessary in their *Case*, they'll spare no cost, but profess they were willing to do more than indeed it was either possible or lawful for them to do. *Thousands of Rams* they are ready to offer; would *ten thousand Rivers of Oil* suffice, could so many be procur'd, they would pour them all out before Him; and whereas nothing could be dearer to them than their *Children*, and amongst them the *first born*, yet if God would *accept* of the death of a Child, they were willing to cause it to *pass through the fire*. Provided that Jer. 32.35. they might retain their *sins*, their injustice, unmercifulness and proud disobedience to the commands of God, they will be as bountiful, expensive and laborious in the *externals* of *Worship* as God would have them to be. They will load his Altar with their *Sacrifices*, provided they may still go on to load God with their *sins*, they will devote all their *substance* to the *Temple* if they may be excus'd the dedicating *themselves to God as a living and holy Sacrifice*, which is Rom. 12.1. the true *reasonable service*. They will pour out thousands of sighs and *prayers* to God, *Faith* as often as He will, *confess* sin as much as He would have them, so that after they have confess'd it, they may be allowed to return to the practice of it.

No, no the Prophet tells them, it is not your *offerings*, your *Rams*, your *Rivers*, nor your *Children*, that will serve this turn: These things, tho' some of them be such as God has *appointed*, yet these *alone* will

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will not please God, there is something else God looks for from a People that would humble themselves aright before Him, and meet God in his Worship with acceptation; and if you *ask* what that is? *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?* q. d. you inquire how you may come before the Lord, how you may humble your selves in a right manner, so as that the anger of the Lord may be turned away from you, and you may escape his *impudent* judgments. You seem to be very desirous to have the Lord still to be your God, and that He would continue you to be his People, that He would still go on to deliver and to defend you, as He has done in times past: then know that it is not *sacrifices only* that God desires, but that which in conjunction therewith he does principally and ultimately require, is, that you do Justly, and love Mercy, and walk humbly with your God: these things are good and acceptable to God, and indispensibly *incumbent* upon you, as the Lord has shewed them to be his mind and will concerning you; And tho' there are other things that God does require, which in their place and time are to be attended to, yet nothing comparatively with these, as to do justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with thy God.

In which words we have these two general parts.

1. A tacit *Reprehesion* that the Prophet gives this People, reproving that *fleshy* confidence they plac'd in the external duties of God's *worship*, and much more in those *arbitrary* ways of Devotion which were of their own *devising*.

2. A positive *Direction* that he lays before them how they might come before God in his own *instituted* Worship with *acceptation*. And in that direction there are three particulars considerable. 1. A discovery of a Divine *rule* which we are to attend to in all our addresses to God, and that is the *Revelation* God has made of his mind and will to us, *he hath shewed thee, oh man*. 2. A specification of things that are conformable to that rule, and to be regarded by us, *viz. Justice* that is to be done, *Mercy* that is to be loved, and *Humility* that is to be express'd in our *walking with God*. * The last of which, walking humbly with God, compriseth the whole of our Covenant Obedience, *Gen. 17. 1.* as the two former are eminent instances of it in particular. 3. A Rational *enforcement* of the forementioned duties by *arguments*; one taken from the *goodness* of the things, he hath shewed thee, oh man, *what is good*, another from the *Will* and *Command* of God concerning these things, *and what doth the Lord require of thee?* These things are good, to do Justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with God, and these are the things that God *requires*, and you must mind and *attend* unto, if you would so appear before God in his *Worship*, as to have the Lord *pacified* to you, and his anger turned away from you. The whole of which may be thus summ'd up.

* Owes on the Spirit.
p. 331.

Doct. That a People who would humble themselves aright before the Lord, would have the difference between Him and Them comprised, and would come before the Lord so as to be accepted with Him; must not rest in and take up with the external duties of God's Worship, but attend unto those things in their practice that are expref-

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five of Real holiness and Obedience to the will of God in what he commands and requires of them.

Before I proceed to prove and improve this proposition it will be needful to premise this in the first place, namely, that the *answer* that the *Prophet* in the *text* gives to this Peoples question, and the *conclusion* I have now formed from it, does not respect the way of *Atonement* or making *satisfaction* to the *Justice* of God for *sin*. For as to *that* there is the same insufficiency in the highest acts of Evangelical obedience as there is in the performing the duties of Divine worship.

Rom. 6. 23. The payment of one *debt* cannot discharge us of another : now we stand engaged to God in a twofold Debt ; a Debt of *punishment*, that is the consequent of sin, whereby we become obnoxious to the *Curse* of the Law, *the Wages of sin is death* : And a Debt of *Duty* which is our obligation to the *Precept* of the Law, and the payment of the Debt of Duty cannot *discharge* us from the debt of sin. When we do our duty we do but what we *ought*, and the doing what we ought cannot be a *compensation* for the doing of what we ought *not* to have done. If we come *short* in our duty that further *increases* the Debt of sin, but tho' we *perform* our duty that does not *lessen* the former debt. We are debtors still to the *Justice* of God, because we have *violated* his holy Law ; the *Sanction* of which was, *the Soul that sins shall die*, and are utterly *insolvent* or incapable to pay this debt by the most exact and continued obedience that we can yield to the *commands* of it, *for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified*.

If therefore the Question be in what way is the justice of God *satisfied* for sin ? in what way and upon what

what account is God *reconcil'd* to Sinners? What is the *meritorious* and procuring cause of the *Grace* and favour of God to a Person or People that have provoked his Anger against them by their sins? *He hath shewed thee, Oh Man*, in his word, that it is not any Obedience of *thine*, that thou dost or *canst* perform unto God, but the obedience, the sufferings, the Righteousness of his own *Son* our Lord Redeemer, that is the onely meritorious procuring cause of God's being reconciled to Sinners. He is the *Surety of that better Covenant* that has paid the *debt of sin* for us and in our place; that was *made Sin for us* by offering himself to God, and did *appear to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*.

Heb. 7. 22.

1 Cor. 5.

21.

Heb. 9. 26.

But if the Question be, what it is that God requires of man according to the terms of the *new Covenant*, that would have the benefit of *Christ's* mediation, so as to have God *actually* reconcil'd to him, and the Anger of God turned away from him? *He hath shewed thee, Oh man*, that it is not some slight external devotion: An outside fasting, or confessing of sin, and humbling your self for a *day*; but that in conjunction with a Serious and Hearty performance of these duties, you *do justly, and Love mercy, and walk humbly with God*. Our Prophet does suppose God's acceptance of the atonement for sin made by our Lord *Jesus Christ*, but lets them know that without a Performance of the necessary duties of the *Gospel*, their claim to that atonement would be fruitless and ineffectual. As there was something that God required of Christ when He substituted himself in our Room to answer for our sins which was his dying for us, so there is something that God Requires of us, if we would have the benefit of the death of Christ. The Gospel does not make void, but establish the Law in

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its preceptive power. *Christ's* dying for sin, and our doing the will of God do very well consist. For to this end He dyed, and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the Dead and Living. That as he dyed for sin, so we should die to sin; and have communion with him in his rising by our walking in newness of Life. That which God required of *Christ* was obedience in a way of merit, that which God requires of us is obedience in a way of duty. Our obligation to obedience is not dissolved, but enforced and heightn'd by the mediatory Obedience of our Lord *Jesus*. To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God ever were, and ever will be incumbent on the Reasonable creature; and are those things that the Lord requires of them that would Seek him with acceptation and success.

This premis'd, I now proceed to confirm the truth of the Proposition, and the proof of it will depend upon shewing these two things; 1. The insufficiency that there is in a bare performance of the duties of Religious Worship separate from the duties of justice, mercy and humble walking with God, to procure the favour of God to a People. 2. The necessity that there is of such a People's attending to the practice of those things that are expressive of real holiness and Obedience to God in conjunction with the duties of God's worship, in order to that end.

And first let us consider the insufficiency that there is in a bare performance of the duties of Religious worship separate from the duties of justice mercy, and humble walking with God, to procure the favour of God to a People, to compromise the difference between God and them, to pacifie his Anger and to avert his judgments. And because this People in the text talk'd so much of their burnt Offerings, their Calves and

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their *Rams*, I shall to make this branch of the *demonstration* more plain and convincing, present you with the *judgment* of God in his word concerning these things, whilst this *way* of worship was in use, and shew you of how little *account* with God these Sacrifices were, when separated from the duties of justice, mercy and humble Obedience.

The Ancient *Sacrifices* are to be considered two ways, 1. as they were *typical* Representations of that *real* Sacrifice which our Lord Jesus Christ offered to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his People when *through the eternal Spirit he offer'd himself to God*. Much of the *Gospel*, as it was Reveal'd in that time, was wrap'd up in those Sacrifices. They did all refer to and prefigure *him that was to come*. For whereas the holy and righteous *Law* of God had threatned Sin with *Death*, it could not be reasonably, supposed, *that the blood of Bulls and of goats should take away sin*. And therefore, the Heathens to supply that defect, having some natural, or rather traditional knowledge of the necessity of sacrifices to make Atonement for sin, did conclude that nothing less than the Life of a *Man* offered in Sacrifice, was sufficient to appease God. But indeed this man, is no other than the *man Christ Jesus*, who by the *Psalmist* is brought in speaking to his Father to this purpose, *Heb. 10. 5. When he cometh into the World, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me.*

Or, secondly, *they* are to be considered as acts of Homage and *Worship* performed by that People to God, and in which they generally rested in a neglect of the *weightier* matters of the Law. And however they thought to please God thereby, we have ample

Quod pro vita hominis nutrita hominis reddatur, non posse aliter Deorum immortalium numen placari arbitrantur.

Cassir de Bell. Gal. lib. 6.

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testimonies in their own Scriptures, which shew how highly God was displeased with *Them*, whilst they took up with these in the neglect of Judgment Mercy and Humble walking with God.

And I'll begin with that *Reproof* the *Prophet* gave King *Saul*, who bore himself much upon this business of sacrificing in the omission of a direct command of God wherein his obedience was concerned, *1 Sam. 15. 22. Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? behold to obey is better than sacrifice: and to hearken than the fat of Rams.* It do's appear by the preceding part of this *history*, that God had sent *Samuel* to *Saul* with a command to destroy the *Amalekites*, and that with a total destruction, *Man and Woman, Infant and suckling, Ox and Sheep, Camel and Ass.* *Saul* applies himself to this work, but did it negligently and in part only. *Agag* the King he spares, supposing it might be for his honour to make him a Prisoner of War to lead him in triumph. Also the best of the Sheep, and of the Oxen, and of the Fatlings, and of the Lambs he saves, and his pretence for that was, that these Fat Beasts would do well to serve God's Altar; 'twas not fit to slay them any where else. What? *hath the Lord as great delight in sacrifices as in obedience?* This was the command of God that all of *Amalek* should be destroyed: *what meaneth then the bleating of the Sheep, and the Lowing of the Oxen which I hear?* Oh, says he, they are for sacrifices to Worship God with. No, the *Prophet* tells him, God will accept of no such Worship, as is besides his command, and is founded in a contempt of that. *To obey is better* (pleases God more) *than Sacrifice.* Better thou hadst throughly obeyed the command

verse 3.

4.

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mand of God, tho' there had not been a Ram left in the *Universe* to be offer'd in Sacrifice.

My second *proof* for this I take from the 50th *Psalms* at the seventh *verse* we find the Lord addressing himself to that People thus ; *Hear, oh my People, and I will speak ; oh Israel, and I will testify against thee.* God had something to *speak* to them, and something to *testify* against them. That which he had to say to them is at *ver. 8.* *I will not reprove thee for thy Sacrifices or thy burnt-offerings continually before me.* It seems they were so punctual in their Sacrifices, they would not rob God of a *Lamb*, nor fail him of an hour ; their burnt offerings were *continually* before him. So that he would not tax them for any remissness or deficiency that way. But tho' He would not reprove them for their Sacrifices, he would reprove them for their *sins* and that to purpose, asking them, *what they had to do, to declare his statutes, or take his Covenant in their Mouth, seeing they hated instruction and cast his words behind them?* Come, says God, you load my Altar with your *sacrifices*, but at the same time you make me to serve with your *sins*. You are a sacrificing People, but you are also a *wicked* People. You hear, but you hate my word, and when my commands are set before you, you take them and cast them behind you. Theft and Whoredom, and evil speaking, you practise, or connive at in others, and you think your sacrificing should make amends for all. No, says the Lord, I testify against you, that except you Repent and Reform, it is not all your Sacrifices can help you, but you your selves will become a Sacrifice to my justice, I will deal with you as with others that are mine Enemies, and live in a total neglect of me. Wherefore, *consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* He

ver. 16, 77.

*ver. 18, 19
20.*

num-

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numbers them with those that *forget* God, because they rejected his commands, when yet at the same time they were so exact in their sacrifices, that He had nothing to reprove them for in that matter.

The Prophet *Isaiah* in his 1st chapter from the 11th to the 21st verse, does at large represent the judgment of God concerning this ancient way of worship sever'd from Judgment, Mercy and Faith. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord, I am full of burnt offerings, &c.* To what purpose, Lord? hast thou not requir'd these things? true, but there is something else too that I require of you, to do Justly to love Mercy and walk Humbly with me; and where are those offerings which I most delight in? *Bring no more vain oblations.* Lord! they are thy Oblations, ay but they are vain, and altogether unprofitable to you as you do offer them. *Incense is an abomination to me, 'tis iniquity even the solemn meeting.* Iniquity Lord! 'tis thy worship, and is it iniquity to Worship God? No, not in it self, but as you order the matter it is so; such worship as yours is, is no better than an open affront to me, whilst you think to put me off with this, and at the same time practise all manner of leudness and wickedness *Your hands are full of blood,* you are unjust and unmerciful, and whilst that blood is in your hand, what matters to me all the Blood of Beasts that you shed from time to time before my Altar?

Indeed it seems to have been the great burden of the *Prophetical* Ministry, to convince that People of the sin and Vanity of their trusting in these Sacrifices, whilst they neglected the duties of practical obedience, 'I was a sharp reproof to this purpose which the Lord by another prophet gave them, *Jer. 7.* where having discover'd in the former part of the Chapter

v. 11.

13.

there are in
these ver. 14.
expressions a-
gainst for-
mality.
Burr. on
Hose.

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Chapter their groundless confidence and trusting in the *Temple*, which He threatens to do so as He had done to *Shilo*, He lets them know that their Sacrifices were of no more account with him at *v. 21*. Thus saith the Lord of hosts the God of Israel put your burnt-offerings unto your Sacrifices, and eat Flesh. q.d. keep your Sacrifices to your selves, & dispose of them as you will; eat them, do with them what you please. The burnt-offerings were wholly to be consum'd in the fire: The People were not to partake of them, but of the peace-offerings and thank-offerings they might eat; now, says God, you may take all for me; eat your burnt-offerings as well as your peace-offerings, I care not for any of them. And the Reason, upon which this Conviction is grounded, is at the 22th *v.* For I spake not unto your Fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the Land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or Sacrifices, *v. 23*. But this thing commanded I them, saying, obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my People: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. The first word that God spake unto Israel was this, Obey my voice: This was that he commanded them, before he commanded them concerning Burnt-offerings: The ten Commandments which contain the rule of Moral Obedience, he delivered to them in the first place, and afterwards his statutes and ordinances that were to govern his publick *Worship*. But, says he, that that was first commanded by me is last and least of all minded by you. You are for Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices, but not for obeying my voice. Well! put your Burnt-offerings to your Sacrifices and eat them, do with them what you will I will not be concerned in them.

To all which we may add that express testimony that the Lord gave them of his preference of moral

ver. 14

Assen. Ar.
not.

Patrick's
Epit. pag.
527.

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duties to those that were only Ritual and Ceremonial, *Hose. 6.* He tells them *v. 5.* *That He had bewed them by the Prophets,* and every stroke was to cut down this fleshly confidence of theirs, that they plac'd in their sacrifices, whilst they neglected the other substantial duties of Religion, *v. 8.* *For I desired mercy and not Sacrifice,* (or mercy rather than Sacrifice) *and the knowledge of God* (an obediential knowledge) *more than burnt-offerings.* I shall close this with that sentence of the Scribe, *Mark 12.* Who having asked our Lord, *Which is the first commandment of all?* Our Saviour answers, to *Love God* with our whole Soul, and the Second to it, to *Love our neighbour as our selves.* Hereupon the Scribe said unto him, *Well Master, thou hast said the truth, this is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.* And that he apprehended Christ aright, our Lord's approving him in what he said does manifest. *When Jesus saw that he answer'd discreetly he said unto him, Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God.*

vii. 28

30.

31.

32

34.

II.

And now I proceed to the Second branch of the Demonstration, to shew the necessity of practical Obedience in conjunction with the duties of Divine Worship for a People to attend unto that would have the Anger of God appeas'd to them, And because the text furnishes us with sufficient matter for the proof of this, I shall present you with three considerations which it contains and proposes to this purpose. 1. That this is Good, and therefore to be desir'd and pursu'd by us. 2. That this the Lord requires, which lays us under an indispensable obligation to attend thereunto. 3. That this God has been pleas'd to shew and reveal to us, and therefore we are inexcusable if we live in a neglect of it.

1. The necessity of practical Obedience in conjunction with the duties of Divine Worship does appear from the consideration of *the goodness of it*. Whatever the Lord requires of man, to be done it is *good*: Good in it *self*, good for *him* and good for *others*. 'Tis *Absolutely* good, *Personally* good and *Relatively* good. To do justly is *good*, to love mercy is *good*, to walk humbly with God is *good*. And what an attractive is this to come up to our *duty*, that is so good in the *whole* and good in every *part* of it.

These things are *good in themselves*, not only because they are *commanded*, as all the *positive* institutions of worship are good, but they have an *intrinsic* goodness, and commend themselves to us from their very *nature*, they are such things as flow from the *nature of God*, as well as bear a conformity to the *Will* of God. So that it is impossible they should be otherwise than good, or that what is contrary to them should be *so*. Injustice, unmercifulness and disobedience to God cannot be good, they are *Evil*, and *altogether* Evil, and will be so for ever, *Deut.* 30. 15. *See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil*. Holiness is *good*, and sin is *evil*; and it is impossible that either of them should be other than what they are. Sin cannot become *Good*, holiness cannot become *evil*: the difference betwixt holiness and sin is as great as betwixt good and evil; that except good could become evil, and evil good, the nature of good and evil be alter'd and confounded, it is impossible that Holiness should be any other-wise than good, and sin any other thing than the worst and the purest evil.

These things are also *Good for us*, so that we cannot more directly seek and promote our own good and *happiness* than in the practising of them. Is that

good that is *amiable* and lovely? what so lovely as holiness? That is the *glory* of the Divine *Being*, and the *likeness* of God in Man. Is that good that is *pleasant* and delightful? the sweetest pleasures are to be found in the *ways* of God. None enjoy such *peace* and tranquillity in their mind, are so free from fears and *offences* as those who have the strictest regard to God's commands. Or is that good that is *profitable*? we are assur'd that *godliness is profitable to all things, having a Promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Oh how good is it to *walk* with God! to *awake* with God, and to be in the *fear of the Lord* all the day! Whereas *many say, Who will shew us good?* Would they seek it in the way of God's commands they would assuredly *find* it.

And these things are good for *others* too; how advantageous and beneficial to the World are *Justice* and *Mercy*? how much do they conduce to the good order of it? how sweet are the influences that they diffuse amongst all persons? who is not the better for them? The godly are refreshed with them, they adorn the Gospel, and commend Religion to others as a real substantial thing that is worthy their consideration and choice. The Religion that lies only in forms and discourse is an airy, unaffecting thing, and gets no ground in the World, but *that* that is operative and powerful commends it self to the Consciences of Men; these things are good for the bodies, and good for the Souls of others, and that is one Reason of the strict charge that is laid upon the Ministers of the Gospel to be frequent in the urging and pressing of them, *Tit. 2. 8. These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works: these things are good and profitable unto men.* And this is further enforced by,

Pf. 119.
165.

1. Tim. 4.
8.

Pf. 4. 6.

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2. A consideration of *the will of God, as being that which the Lord requires of us.* 'Tis *His* will concerning, and his command to us, who is the *Lord*, who has an unquestionable *right* in us and a supream *power* over us, and whose *will* is a binding *law* as well as a sufficient *Reason* to us; so that it is no arbitrary or indifferent matter whether we will *obey* or no, but he that requires you to perform the duties of his solemn Worship, and in Obedience to whose command you ingage in them, does likewise require you to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with your God. And as his willing of these things to be duties incumbent on Man is that that is highly consentaneous and agreeable to his own glory, that the reasonable creature should be just and merciful as he is, and be always mindful of that infinite distance that there is between him and it, and the highest deference that upon that account is due to him; so the regular subordination that there ought to be in *our* Wills to *His*, the relation we stand in to Him as the *Lord*, and the intire subjection we owe to Him in that Relation; lays us under the strictest obligation to observe and obey all his requirements. Consider then.

The Lord, that is thy supream *Ruler* and Governour, He in whose hands is the disposal of all things, *who doth according to his will in the Army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the Earth*; He that is the one *Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy*, who has Jam. 4. 12 the power of Life and Death, and whose power reacheth to the Soul as well as the body, can save or destroy both in Hell. He whom the Angels obey, and are His *Ministers hearkning to the voice of his word*: He, whose Law at first impress'd upon them, the *inanimate* creatures do every day fulfil: This *Sovereign*

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Lord who is *King* throughout the World, requires that you should be Just and Merciful and Humble. Every act of disobedience to his command is a high contempt of his *Authority*. 'Tis the character of the wicked to say, *Who is Lord over us?* and again, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?* Oh let us take heed of becoming guilty either in mind or practice of so great an impiety. Moreover,

Is. 12. 4.

Exod. 5. 2.

The Lord, that is thy *Redeemer*, that has bought thee with the inestimable price of his own blood : that laid down his Life to deliver thee from Sin and Death and Hell, was willing to empty himself of his glory for a time, to be poor and mean, to be despised and persecuted and suffer the accursed death of the *Cross* for your sake : rather than you should dye, He would dye in your place ; rather than you should become a sacrifice, He was willing to be made one Himself : that out of Obedience to the Will of God, and from the greatness of his love to the Children of Men travelled with the greatest sorrows, drunk off the bitterest cup and underwent the Curse for you, He also requires the most exact obedience at your hand. *And ye are not your own, but ye are bought with a price : therefore glorifie God in your body and in your spirit which are God's.* Yea,

Cor. 6.

9. 20.

The Lord, that is thy bountifull *Benefactor*, that does thee good continually, that loads thee with his benefits every day, that prevents thee with mercy, that supplies thee with good, that delivers thee in thy straits, succours thee in thy temptation, hears thy prayers, and is so ready to appear for thy help : The Lord in whom thou dost Live and Move and
 Is. 84. 11. *haft thy Being, that is a Sun and a Shield, will give Grace and Glory, and withhold no good thing ;* that has given thee so many tastes of his Love, such fre-

quent experiences of his goodness, and yet has greater things in reserve to bestow, what is it that he requires of thee as a grateful return for all these benefits but that thou do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with thy God. consider then *who* it is that requires these things of you; and how reasonable and equitable is it that we should answer *His* requirements in the most punctual manner? Especially if we add,

3. The last consideration that the Lord who hath required these things *hath shewed and made known the same*, has promulg'd and declared his *will* very plainly and expressly, in these things, to the understanding and capacity of all persons. *He hath shewed thee, Oh man, what is good, and what the Lord doth require of thee.* He requires nothing of thee but what He has *shewed* thee. These things are common to *man as man*, and therefore requir'd of *every man*, He has spoke them to thy *ear*, he has made them visible to thy *Eye*, they are such things as do approve themselves to thy Rational Faculties: These are not Mysteries but plain discoveries of the mind and will of God, He has set thy duty in a clear light, which whosoever attends unto may attain to the understanding of it. He hath shewed thee, Oh man.

Partly by the *Light of Nature* that some of these things, at least, as to do justly and to love mercy, are pleasing and acceptable to him. He has ingrav'd them upon thy very *Heart*, so that reflecting upon the Original principles of thy Nature, and by conversing with thy self, asking thy Conscience questions, and harkning to the Answers and dictates of it, this thou mayst know and understand, that to do justly is good; and injustice is evil; to love mercy is

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pleasing to God, and the contrary to it as displeasing to him. Did the Heathens of old, and do they still at this day know it and art thou a stranger to it? Read what is said of them, *Rom. 2. 14, 15. the Gentiles which have not the written Law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the Law, are a law unto themselves, which shews the work of the Law written in their hearts.*

But principally He hath shewed it thee by *the light of his Word* that contains a more explicate and full Revelation of man's duty. All the lines of it are there drawn at length, all the particulars of it clearly stated. If thou goest to *the Law and to the Testimony*, thou may'st have a sufficient direction how to act in all thy concerns, how to order thy steps in every path, what it is God requires of thee every day, in every place and in every condition: what thy duty towards God and what thy duty towards man is. And what cause have we to adore the goodness of God, that has furnish'd us with such a clear light to direct us in our walking with him, that we have not only a *Law-light* but a *Gospel-light* that shines so brightly? Jesus Christ is come a light into the World, He hath reveal'd God unto us, He is the way, the truth and the life, that both by his *Preaching* and by his *Example* has opened the mind of God to us, and

John 8. 12. He that followeth Him shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.

And because God hath shewed it unto thee, thou art *inexcusable* oh man! who livest in the neglect or contempt of these requirements of His. Thou canst not plead *ignorance*; or say, when thou dost an unjust action, that thou didst not know better; or be unmerciful and say thou didst not know it to be a fault; or be proud and disobedient against God and ask what evil there is in'thoh take heed that thou dost not

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sin against Light and Knowledge, for to him that knoweth to do good and doth it not, to him it is sin, sin with an aggravation, that will be attended with a *forer* punishment on them that are guilty of it, even to be *beaten with many stripes*. So much for the confirmation of the Doctrine, that which follows is

Jam. 5. 17.

Luk. 12. 47

The APPLICATION.

1. This Doctrine yields, at all times a useful, but on this day a very seasonable caution to us, *to take heed that we rest not in mere outward duties of Worship*, as if that were all that God required; and as it is to be feared many persons do, to the deceiving of themselves. They are very exact, very frequent and very punctual in these things, but guilty of a woful neglect of the moral duties of Religion, and so are but partial, and consequently unsincere in their obedience. Let us take heed that we deceive not our selves in the same way. If we halve it with God in the matter of our duty, He will cut us short in the matter of his mercy. What if such a Religion should obtain a temporal reward, 'tis insufficient to evidence a real interest in the saving love of God.

There is no doubt but God has requir'd these things of us. All the *true* methods, means and ways of *Worship* are of God's appointment. Praying and Hearing and Fasting are his *Ordinances*; but he never intended that we should rest in these and go no further: To do this and no more: to attend unto these and neglect other things, is a Badge of loathsome *Hypocrisie* in the sight of God, and branded in Scripture as the guise of an unsound Heart. Hypocrites and unsound Professors know they must do *something* in Religion. Something they would do to *appease* God when He is Angry; something, to continue His fa-

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your when Providence is easie and comfortable to them; something, to keep up a *Credit* and Reputation with others for Religion; and something to quiet the importunities of their own *Conscience*; but then they resolve to do as little as they can, and because a slight and heedless performance of the Worship of God is the *easiest* part of Religion, and most consistent with their unmortified lusts, they pitch upon this course.

'Tis indeed much easier to confess a hundred sins, than to *forfake one*: 'tis easier to spend a whole day in publick Worship, than to deny the enticement of a Lust, or to withstand a Temptation when it opportunely presents; because the one is only the labour of the body, the other requires the exercise of the Soul: the one may be a weariness to the Flesh, but the other is cross and opposite to the beloved interests of it; and carnal Hearts may make shift to brook the one, tho' they cannot bear the other. A little outward Penance and Mortification of the body they can undergo, but a true *Repentance* of sin, that consists in deserting the practice and mortifying the principle of sin is utterly distasteful to them. Oh then as we would acquit our selves of the charge and guilt of Hypocrisie, let us take heed of resting in the outward duties of Worship. Tho' your Eyes be lifted up to Heaven, if your affections be fix'd upon Earthly objects; tho' you bow your knee before God, if your Hearts do Rebel against Him: if you acknowledge your transgression, but do still retain and practise it; if you make many Prayers but don't endeavour to live answerably to 'em; if you vow and promise to lead a new life, but as soon as you go from this place forget what you have been doing: What is
all

all this but a mere mockery? And be not deceived, Gal. 6. 7.
God is not mocked.

This part of the Worship of God that we are now engaged in is no doubt a very necessary duty incumbent upon us. God has commanded it, and special providences call us to it. Who does not see what need there is of Fasting, of Prayer and Humbling our selves before the Lord? But Remember this is but one part of what God requires of you. The true Fast does not consist in a bare observance of those things that outwardly relate to such a day. A man may be very *Formal* in them, forbear all servile work, put on meaner apparel, attend the publick duties of God's House, and outwardly seem to be very submissive and serious therein, and yet if this be all, God does disown such a Fast from being the day that he has chosen and appointed, *Isa.* 58. 5. *Is it such a Fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his Soul! Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him! wilt thou call this a Fast, and an acceptable day unto the Lord?* No, this is not the day that God has chosen: And yet this is the only Fast that many keep, that is fill'd up with corporal gestures and performances. What then is the Fast that God has chosen? He himself describes it in the following verses, *to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy bur-* ver. 6. 7 *dens, and to let the oppressed go free, -----to deal thy bread to the hungry, to bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, to cover the naked, and hide not thy self from thy own flesh, i. e. turn not away from relieving thy poor Brother: This is the true Fast, the Fast that God has chosen, to break off from our sins, and to do justly, and to love mercy.*

And, Oh that this may be the Fast that we may
D 2 keep,

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keep, a day that God may accept, and accept us in it! we seem to be sensible that the Just and Righteous God has a controversy with this Nation, that He is come forth to plead with *England*. We have like the *Jews*, been unthankful for mercies, do soon forget our wonderful deliverances and refuse to be reform'd by the various methods God has us'd with us to that end, and now we think God is Angry with us, and we fly to these duties of Fasting and Prayer, and hope these will appease God; and is this all that we will do? God will upbraid us with such Fasts, soon grow weary of them, and break in through such Fasts with his judgments upon us. He looks for more, he requires more, and more than this we must do, if we would prevail with God, and obtain a blessing from Him, and that now leads me to the

2d Use. I would make of this truth, to *Exhort* and persuade you to come up to the full duty of this day in the several branches that grow upon the text, to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God; which are all of them such things as all that profess the name of our Lord Jesus should labour to be very exact in.

1. *Do justly*: Let justice and righteousness regulate your dealings with Men, and be expressed in all your concerns with them. The best description of of justice, (that branch of it that is called *commutative*,) is that which our Lord and Saviour has ven of it, *Mat. 7. 12. whatsoever things ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* i. e. so deal with others, as you would have them to deal with you, if they were in your place, and you in theirs. No man would have another to deal fraudulently.

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dulently and deceitfully with him, to cheat and wrong and oppress him; do you to others as you would have them to do to you. Be as just in your word, as true to your promise, as exact in your dealings as you would have others to be? This is the thing that is just, and that this Justice God does require of you, Appears by the reproof the Prophet gives the violaters of it in the words that follow the text, *Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? shall I count them pure with the picked balances and with the bag of deceitful weights?* These uneven balances, deceitful weights and scant measures, that are the Instruments of unrighteousness, are hateful to God, and tho' for a time they may serve a covetous humour, and men may heap up treasures to themselves thereby, yet there is a *curse* that attends such persons, and a *moth* that will consume their riches; those treasures of wickedness will not always continue in the house of the wicked.

To do justly is a thing that most persons know, but too few make Conscience of, but justice is a thing that must be *done*. 'Tis not enough to have the *notion* of it in our Mind, but the practice of it must be in our *hand*. To be just and not to do justly in our particular actions is a contradiction. *He that doth Righteousness is Righteous.* And that we may do so, let us consider, how pleasing and acceptable this is to God, *Prov. 21. 3. to do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice.* Let us also consider what an Ornament it is to Christianity; to do justly is to *adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, Tit. 3. 10.* which does so strictly and frequently injoin the practice of Righteousness betwixt man and man. And indeed what does Religion teach you if it does not teach

v. 10.

v. 11.

Joh. 3. 7.

Luk. 20. 25

Rom. 13. 7

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teach you this piece of morality ? Further consider how necessary the practice of this Divine Vertue is to fit and qualifie you for converse and communion with God in his Ordinances ; so that when the Question was put of old, *Lord who shall abide in thy Tabernacle ? who shall dwell in thy holy hill ?* 'Tis answered, *He that walketh uprightly, and worketh Righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his Heart. He that back-biteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour, Psal. 15. 1, 2, 3.* And if this does not move some of us, let such consider, that the just God, to whom vengeance doe belong, does very often execute his Righteous Judgments upon notorious and impenitent violaters of Justice, *1 Thes. 4. 6. that no man go beyond and defraud his Brother in any matter : because that the Lord is the avenger of all such.* You are a trading People that I speak to, and have dealings in the World, I beseech you to consider these things and have a strict regard to justice and righteousness in all you do. And so doing,

2. *Love Mercy*, labour to be of a merciful disposition : *shew mercy*, and do it from a principle of *Love*, love to *God* and love to *Man*. The object of Mercy are the *Miserable*, and the exercise of this grace consists in doing what in us lies to relieve those that are in necessity, to comfort those that are cast down, to counsel those to whom our advice may be helpful, to sympathize with those that are afflicted, to assist those that are tempted, and to help them to bear their burden : In one word, to do all the good that we can to the Souls and Bodies of all men, and especially to those that are *of the household of Faith*. Be ready to give to them that ask, to lend to them that would borrow of you, and to forgive those that have offended against you. A merciful man is such a one as *Job*,

who

who was *Eyes to the blind, and Feet to the lame, and a Father to the poor, Job 29. 15.* The all-wise God has so order'd it in his Providence that we should always have objects and occasions for the exercise of this Grace. Some are poor, some are sick, some are carried into captivity, some are bereav'd of their relations, that others that are healthful and rich and prosperous in the World might succour them in their distresses : And some left to fall into sin, that those that stand by Grace, might restore such with a *spirit of meekness*. Think it not enough that you are strictly just, but remember that you must be merciful too. Yea you cannot be truly just except you be merciful, to deny to others some part of our own, when the providence of God calls us to give it, is injustice, as well as not to give them what is their own, and the highest injustice, injustice to God, in not using the goods of this World, to the end for which he has intrusted us with them.

7. And as Divine *Love* is the general Principle of all good actions, so it is the immediate Fountain from whence all the Streams of Mercy do issue. They that love Mercy, will be ready to shew Mercy, and think it no cost, no burden, no weariness to do it. That that proceeds from Love we do freely and chearfully, and that puts a lustre upon every act of Mercy. And to excite this Principle in you, consider, that shewing Mercy to others does assimilate and make you like unto God himself, who delights in Mercy; who when he does proclaim his Name, does it especially by the display of his Goodness and Mercy; and should we not affect the nearest Union with God, and the highest Resemblance of him? *Luke 6. 36. Be ye therefore merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful.* Also consider that the Love of Mercy is a special evidence of

Exod. 34.

of

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of the Sincerity of your Love to God, to be Merciful for God's sake does proceed from the love of God: But, *whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his Brother hath need, and shutteth up his Bowels of compassion how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* 1 John 3. 17. And let us often seriously think of the great day of the Lord, when nothing but Divine Mercy can stand and befriend us, and that they are merciful men who are particularly describ'd in Scripture that shall have the benefit of the Divine Mercy. The Apostle's prayer for Onesiphorus, 2 Tim. 1. does import so much, *v. 16. the Lord give Mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus for he oft refreshed me, ----- the Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.* And it is expressly said on the contrary, *that He shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy,* Jam. 2. 13. How ready and willing then should we be to embrace all Opportunities of shewing Mercy. In which, as well as in the former duty of doing justly, we should have respect unto God, his glory as the end, and his command as the reason of all that we do, which is the sum of the last duty, that you

3. *Walk humbly with your God*; endeavouring to approve your selves to Him in all that you do, which is that that puts an excellency into and a beauty upon your due tyes to men, and makes them acceptable with God through Jesus Christ, as being ultimately done to him. Endeavour that your whole life may be as much as possibly you can a continued walk with God. Set him always before your Face, have your Eye constantly to him: keep up your Hearts with God, in a frame fit for Communion with God at all times. Observe his Providence, follow the Guidance of it, receive the Instructions of it, and comply with all the Calls of it. Be led by the

Mat. 25.
24. and fin.

the Spirit of God, and be obsequious to all his holy motions: let your conversation be in Heaven. Be followers of the Lord Jesus, and walk as you have Him for an Example.

And be very *Humble* in your walking with God, depend upon him for Divine assistance and *strength* in all that you do for his name. Be Humble and Reverent in your *Worshipping* of God. Ascribe all the *Glory* to him of all the *good* you receive and do. Be Low, be vile in your own sight, and exalt the Lord in your Soul: Let him be your first and your last: Begin all your works with God, and end them in Him. Remember to this purpose, how God has declar'd Himself as to this part of your duty, that *He resisteth the Proud, but giveth Grace* Jam. 4. 6. *to the humble.* And has promis'd to *dwell with the* Isa. 57. 19. *Humble.* Therefore nip and check all the *buddings* of pride when it first begins to shoot. Be not proud of your cloathing, but be cloathed with *Humility.* 1 Pet. 5. 5. Be not proud of your Parts and Gifts, but use them to Edifie one another in Love. Be not proud of your Riches and Estate, for you must shortly leave them, and give an account, to Him that lends them you, how you have improved them for Him. Indeed we do very much forget our selves what we were, and do yet continue to be *Sinful dust*, when our hearts do swell with this Vanity. This is the *worst*, because (as it is probable,) it was the *first* sin. And is still the first that lives, and the last that dies in the heart. Labour therefore thro' the Spirit of God to mortifie it in all the kinds of it both Corporal and Spiritual. And indeed what way soever we look, we may see enough to make and to keep us humble. If we look up to God how should his *Majesty* abase us! If we look to our *selves*, how low
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should our sins lay us ! If we look to *Saints*, it may humble us to see how short we come of many of them in Grace and Holiness ; And if to *Sinners*, to consider that such we were, and such we should have continued to be, had not the free and effectual Grace of God made the difference. You that have
 1 Cor. 4. 7. *most, have nothing but what you have received.*

And for your *Direction*, as to the whole ;

1. *Be convinced that your duty lies in these things ;* that they are not things indifferent, but indispensibly incumbent upon you : If any thing be *necessary* for us to attend unto, the things here propos'd to us are so. To make light and little account of them, is to cashier all practical Obedience, for what remains to be done by you, if doing justly, and shewing mercy, and walking humbly with God, be not your duty ? Yea these are the great and weighty duties of the *Gospel*, that claim our primary regard and attendance to them. And yet how many professing the Christian Religion, act as if *Christianity* were nothing at all concern'd therein ; which is and ought to be for a *Lamentation* ? Persons that are unjust and unmerciful to men, and disobedient to God, and that oftentimes without finding any Remorse or Regret in themselves, whose Religion has nothing of substance in it, but lies in some speculative notions
 a Tim. 3. 5. *only, which they have taken up ; these have a form of Godliness, but deny the power thereof ; from such, they that would walk with God in a course of Obedience, must turn away.*

2. *Make sure of a Being in Christ by Faith, that in him you may bear and bring forth this fruit unto God.*
 Such

such an Interest in, and *Union* with the Lord *Jesus* by a Faith that is of the Operation of God, is absolutely necessary to a right discharge of any and every duty. For tho' some of the things that God requires, may be done as to the external part, and what is so done may be *materially* good, without any such *special Grace* received and exerted in the doing of them, yet are they *formally* defective, as not proceeding from a *pure Heart*, and a *good Conscience*, and *Faith unfeigned*, which are the declared Principles, necessary to constitute and denominate an action Evangelically good. Humane Nature indeed, refin'd from the more dreggy and sensual part of it, by Precepts of *Morality*, may raise it self to a practice of That that is purely moral in these things. So some of the Heathens have not only been strictly just, but largely beneficent, and have done much good both in their publick capacities and private stations. But in as much as our Evangelical Walking and Conversing with God is concern'd in these actions, that they be done thro' a Divine Strength, and directed to the Glory of God, this the Mind of Man is altogether ignorant of, whilst estranged from the Light and Power of that Faith, whereby we come to be in Christ, and to be one with him: For as it is thro' his *Mediation* only, that we are, and can be accepted in any good we do; so there is a Divine *Grace* communicated from him to us, that alone can strengthen us to do, and persevere in the doing these things, and also direct our hearts to intend the Glory of God therein: And which is that Qualification that specifies duties of *Evangelical Obedience* from acts of *Moral Virtue*. Thus the fruit ever answers the species and kind of the Tree it grows upon, is *corrupt* Mat. 7. 17. or *good* according as that is; and nothing less than

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- such a supernatural Grace receiv'd in Union with Christ, is sufficient to make this Evil Tree good, so to alter the Corrupt Nature of Man, to dethrone the Dominion of Sin, and to bring the Soul under the power of a Principle of Righteousness and Holiness whereby it becomes disposed, *sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*
- 2 Tim. 2. 21. Then think it not enough that you are Christians by Name, by an outward *Baptism*, and visible *Profession*, but make sure of a real spiritual In-being in Jesus Christ, in whom only it is that we can do any thing that is good, so as to be accepted with God in Joh. 15. 5. it; and *without whom we can do nothing*, that is a bringing forth fruit unto God.

3. Possess your selves with as lively apprehensions as you can get of the worth and excellency of the things God requires of you. And these, to do justly, to love merey, and to walk humbly with God, are all of them things that have a real and transcendent worth in them; such things as do approve themselves to be Good and excellent to an enlightened mind, and a well-disposed heart. They are such things, wherein the Perfection of our Nature, as it lies in a conformity to God, and subjection to him, does consist. They are also Lovely in the Eyes of others, and things of good Report, that cause Religion to be well spoken of. None but the debauched, and such whose Con-
- 1 Tim. 4. 2. sciences are fear'd as with a hot Iron, will open their mouths against them; to all others, that have any sense of Humanity, and Conscience left, they commend themselves, as things that are good and excellent, worthy to be practis'd and imitated by others. Having such a lively apprehension of the worth of these things, we shall not look upon them as a task and

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and imposition upon us, but do them with delight as things that are most suitable and agreeable to us.

4. *Read, study, and in all things consult the Word of God, to regulate your doings to God, and dealings with Men.* This written Word is the Revealed Will of God. This *shews* us all things we are commanded, and all we are forbidden. This Word is able to make ^{2 Tim. 3. 17.} the Man of God perfect, thoroughly furnish'd unto all good works. And what can more commend it to us to be the Book of our daily Converse and Meditation? I don't wonder that *David* speaks so much in the praise and commendation of it, when he declares it was a *Lamp unto his feet, and a Light unto his path.* Whether ^{Psal. 119. 105.} it were night or day with him, whatever state of Life he pass'd through, the Word of God was his Rule, his Counsellor, that never fail'd him, and never misled him. How much is it then our wisdom to have a constant Regard to this Word, to see that warranting our actions, guiding us in our difficulties, and reclaiming us when we go astray. Such is the Promise for our direction, consulting with the Word, and seeking God to enable us by his Spirit to understand it, *Isa. 30. 21. Thine Ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*

5. *Awe your hearts with the Authority of God in his Commands, when Temptations would bribe your Affections to turn out of the path of Duty.* We need something to check those inclinations there are in us to comply with Temptations, which those that are engag'd in a course of Obedience are wont to meet with: And
nothing

nothing so effectual to that purpose, as to consider that the Lord who hath shewed us where our duty lies, has also *Requir'd* that we should walk therein. That his Precepts are not only Counsels, but *Commands*, which we cannot violate, without being guilty of a high Contempt of God, and exposing our selves to his displeasure. If the Charge of an *Earthly* Superiour has so much force, as to restrain Men from those things that their Natural Appetites incline them to, (as the *Rechabites*, who would not drink Wine, because their Father had commanded them to forbear;) how much more should the Command of the Great God of Heaven and Earth influence us to a vigorous Resistance of all those Temptations, that would divert us from our Duty to Him? 'Tis enough to oppose and silence any Temptation when we are in the way of our Duty, to charge our selves with this, that God *has commanded us to keep his Precepts diligently.*

6. And lastly; *Take heed and beware of Covetousness, which is that Evil in the heart, from whence Temptations ordinarily do proceed, or which they strive to work upon, to turn us aside from doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God.* Whosoever indulges this Evil in himself, and is govern'd more by a worldly Interest, than the Concernments of God's Glory, his own present Peace, and Eternal Happiness, will often halt in the practice of these things. Opportunities to be unjust and unmerciful, when they present, will inflame his Lust, and cause him to break with God. Pray that God would mortifie this Evil in your heart. Arm your self with all the considerations of the vanity and insufficiency that there is in the greatest worldly affluence
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to make you happy, and especially think often of that mortifying Question that our Lord and Saviour has put to us; *Matth. 16. 26. What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul?* No gains of Unrighteousness can countervail the loss of the Soul. Wherefore *knowing the terrour of the Lord,* 2 Cor. 5. 11. let us take heed that we be not overcome by this Secret Evil in our own bosom. Mortifie the Love of the World in you; and set up the Love of God as the Ruling and Governing Principle in all your actions.

THE END.
